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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3517
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 1025
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA PRIORITY 0336
RUEHGI/AMEMBASSY BANGUI PRIORITY 1141
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY 0122
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1268
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY PRIORITY 2572
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1656
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY 1052
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0673
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0676

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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICAWATCHERS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [CD](#)

SUBJECT: CHAD: A WARY CALM IN NDJAMENA

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In a sequence of events which appeared to surprise both the Chadian government as well as the French forces in Chad, rebel forces under the loose umbrella group FUC, possibly in conjunction with southern rebel group led by Djibrine Dassert, penetrated Chad's eastern border with Sudan, its southern border with Central African Republic (CAR) and, on April 11, the central Chadian town of Mongo. Territory was not held for a significant period of time and rebel forces moved on in all cases. Rumors of an imminent rebel assault on the capital circulated the night of April 11, and the town spent a quiet but more than usually tense night. Amcits were advised to stay in their residences until further notice and the Embassy consolidated some outlying family members the night of April 11. The French Ambassador informed DCM that April 12 would be "business as usual" for the French community in Chad but reductions of presence may be in the offing for the french. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) In a sequence of events which appeared to surprise both the Chadian government as well as the French forces in Chad, rebel forces under the loose umbrella group FUC, possibly in conjunction with southern rebel group led by Djibrine Dassert, penetrated Chad's eastern border with Sudan, its southern border with Central African Republic (CAR) and, on April 11, the central Chadian town of Mongo.

¶3. (SBU) On April 10, in eastern Chad, rebels entered the town of Kou Kou (adjacent to Goz Amer refugee camp), entered the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) compound and seized communication equipment. The rebels were described as "aggressive" but did not injure any expatriate staff and were generally respectful of the UNHCR mandate. However, upon entering the Goz Amer refugee camp, the rebels exchanged fire with Chadian gendarmes posted at the entrance of the camp. A local gendarme subsequently died of his wounds. The rebels moved on later that night. The UN moved most of its UN/NGO Kou Kou staff back to Goz Beida and subsequently to Abeche. They report that operations are continuing normally, with all humanitarian workers reported safe and a skeleton local staff managing camps Goz Amer and Djabal. The UN remains at Security Level Three in eastern Chad, with an effort to reduce staff overall by extending vacations, limiting new arrivals, etc. Also on April 10, in southern Chad, rebels entered via the CAR border and temporarily occupied the small outpost of Haraze Mangueigne. In central Chad, around 1 p.m. on April 11, rebels attacked the town of Mongo and headed

north/east for Ati. Mongo is 400 km east of N'djamena.

¶4. (SBU) Post convened an EAC at 4 p.m. on April 11 and requested the official American community and Amcits (via the warden system) to remain in their residences and not circulate at night. These instructions were consistent with those given by the French Ambassador to the French community. The EAC agreed to revise the Chad travel advisory to reflect changed circumstances as soon as feasible. DCM was informed by French Ambassador that the rebels were "blocked" in the town of Bitkine and had not come further in the direction of N'djamena.

¶5. (SBU) As night fell in N'djamena, the town took on the aspect of a ghost town. Word spread quickly that rebel forces were thought to be within a couple of hours (some 240 kilometers) from N'djamena with a convoy of 50 - 70 vehicles. The Presidential Palace underwent heavy reinforcement with the placement of a tank at the entrance. Post asked a number of Embassy dependents residing in slightly outlying areas of N'djamena to consolidate in the residential compound known as the CNPS Compound (also site of the American school). A warden message was sent by text message and e-mail to Embassy wardens at 1:30 a.m. advising them that there were reports of rebels outside of N'djamena.

¶6. (SBU) April 12 dawned on a calm, but visibly subdued city with light street traffic. A reduced LES and Amcit work force is reporting to work at the Embassy. The Chadian army has reinforced its presence heavily around the city and at checkpoints outside of town. The French Ambassador reported to DCM that today was "business as usual" for the French community, and he has instructed the French School to open and French embassy employees to report to work, however, he

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will make an announcement later in the day relative to the French presence. Esso sent non-essential staff home via Yaounde on 4/11. A core staff of 25 remain in N'djamena. Post remains in contact with senior Chadian military officials and senior Presidential advisers.
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